

REVISED CLAIMS

al ^{sub} B1 > --33. A method of conducting a financial or commercial transaction between a purchaser and a vendor of a product, the method comprising the steps of:

utilizing a computerized banking system comprising a plurality of financial institutions; each of said plurality of financial institutions comprising a computer centre comprising a plurality of computer based client accounts, an electronic data network interconnecting said financial institutions; and a plurality of data exchange terminals connected to said network;

utilizing at least one vendor database including product related information connected to the said network;

providing product-related information to the purchaser via one of said terminals; communicating to the vendor database via the network product related information regarding a product required by the purchaser and which information is provided by the purchaser via one of said terminals; and

authorizing payment by the purchaser for the product purchased.

34. A method of conducting a financial transaction between a purchaser and a vendor of a product, the purchaser and the vendor being associated with respective first and second accounts held at respective first and second financial institutions, the method comprising the steps of:

utilizing at least one vendor database including product-related information;

linking a data exchange terminal to the at least one vendor database via a data network linking said first and second financial institutions;

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~~obtaining transaction-related information regarding a product required from the purchaser via the terminal;~~

~~communicating the transaction-related information via the network to the vendor database; and~~

~~initiating an electronic transfer of funds from the first account to the second account for the value of the transaction.~~

35. A method according to claim 34 wherein the first and second financial institutions comprise the same financial institution.

36. A method according to claim 34 wherein the transferring of funds electronically involves debiting the first account and crediting the second account.

37. A method according to claim 34 including the step of obtaining a code from the purchaser to verify authorization of the transaction.

38. A method according to claim 34 wherein the funds are transferred electronically between the first and second accounts in real time response at the conclusion of the transaction.

39. A method according to claim 34 wherein the funds are transferred electronically between the first and second account at a predetermined future time.

40. A method according to claim 33 wherein the terminal includes a display, and the method includes the step of displaying at least one enquiry menu on the display to obtain transaction-related information from the purchaser.

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41. A method according to claim 40 including the step of incorporating icons associated with options relating to the transaction into the at least one enquiry menu so that the purchaser is able to provide the transaction-related information by selecting an icon displayed on the display.

42. A method according to claim 40 including the steps of displaying at least part of the product related information of the display, and updating the product-related information in real time response or on the occurrence of a transaction between the purchaser and the vendor.

43. A method according to claim 34 wherein the transaction-related information includes at least product identification information, the value of the product and details of the account to or from which funds are to be electronically transferred.

44. A method according to claim 34 including any one or more of the steps of verifying the availability of funds in the account, the availability of the vendor product or the qualification of the purchaser to perform the transaction before conclusion of the transaction—

45. A method according to claim 34 including the step of printing a record of the transaction which serves as proof of the transaction.

46. A method according to claim 34 including the step of printing a voucher relating to the transaction which serves as proof of the transaction.

47. A method according to claim 34 including the step of reading an indicator at the terminal, the indicator being configurable by the purchaser to indicate the transaction-related information.

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48. A method according to claim 34 including the step of incorporating the transaction-related information into a statement issued by the first or second financial institution to the purchaser or vendor.

49. A system for conducting a transaction between a purchaser and a vendor of products, the system comprising:

a computerized banking system comprising:

a plurality of financial institutions;

each of said plurality of financial institutions comprising a computer centre comprising a plurality of computer based client accounts;

said computer centres being interconnected by an electronic data network;

a plurality of data exchange terminals connected to an electronic data network;

at least one vendor database comprising product related information connected to said electronic data network; and

system software providing, via the electronic data network, communication of the product related information between said plurality of terminals and said at least one vendor database, and for initiating payment by the purchaser for products purchased from said vendor database.

50. A system for conducting a financial transaction between a purchaser and a vendor of a product, the purchaser and the vendor being associated with respective first and second accounts held at respective first and second financial institutions, the system comprising:

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51 > a data exchange terminal including at least one data input and at least one data output;

at least one vendor database including product-related information;

a communication system which links the terminal to the at least one vendor database, the first financial institution and the second financial institution; and

system software providing communication of product-related information of a transaction between the terminal and the at least one vendor database, and for transferring funds electronically between the first and second accounts to cover the net value of the transaction.

54 ~~A system according to claim 49 wherein the data exchange terminal is a bank service terminal.~~

52 > A system according to claim 50 wherein the communication system comprises an ATM network to which the data exchange terminal, the at least one vendor database, and the first and second financial institutions are linked to facilitate the communication therebetween.

53. A system according to claim 50 wherein the system software facilitates the transfer of funds electronically between the first and second accounts in real time response at the conclusion of the transaction, or at a future predetermined time.

54. A system according to claim 50 including a portable storage device adapted to store product-related information and/or at least part of the system software and/or transaction records.

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55. A system according to claim 54 wherein the portable storage device comprises a smart card.

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B6 > 56. A system according to claim 55 wherein the product-related information is accessible via a data output means of the data exchange terminal and is updatable in real time or on the occurrence of a transaction between the purchaser and the vendor.

61 57. A system according to claim 50 wherein the data output of the data exchange terminal includes a screen, and the system software includes menu drivers for producing enquiry menus on the screen using which the purchaser provides transaction-related information via the data input of the data exchange terminal to the system.

58. A system according to claim 57 wherein the enquiry menus include icons associated with transaction options, and the purchaser is able to select a transaction option by selecting an icon using the data input.

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B2 > 59. A system according to claim 50 wherein the communication system includes conventional telephone lines or dedicated communication lines and an interface which allows the at least one vendor database to communicate with the data exchange terminal utilizing established ATM message protocols.

60. A system according to claim 49 wherein the data exchange terminal includes a printer which issues a record of the transaction or a voucher which serves as proof of the transaction.

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57 61. A system according to claim 50 wherein the data input of the data exchange terminal includes a reader for reading an indicator configured by the purchaser to indicate transaction-related information.

62. A system according to claim 61 wherein the reader comprises an optical reader, and the indicator comprises a card configurable to visually indicate the transaction-related information.

58 63. A system for conducting a financial or commercial transaction between a purchaser and a vendor of products, the system comprising:

an electronic data network including a plurality of bank service terminals for use by a purchaser;

at least one vendor database comprising product related information connected to said electronic data network and accessible from said terminals; and

system software providing communication of product related information between said terminals and said at least one vendor database and for recording payment by the purchaser utilizing said electronic data network--.